THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Government had issued a draft notification *vide* S.O. 167(E) dated 6th February, 2002 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for the purpose of declaring Matheran and surrounding areas as Eco-Sensitive Zone. A large number of objections and suggestions have been received from the public, Maharashtra State Government, peoples' representatives, NGOs and other stake holders in response to the draft notification. The notification is to be finalized keeping in view the objections and suggestions received on the draft notification.

Action plan for mountain development

3170. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high level National Committee has been constituted to prepare an action plan for mountain development; and

(b) if so, what are the terms of reference of the Committee and by when it is expected to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) A National Committee for celebration of UN International Year of Mountains 2002 has been constituted. However, its Terms of Reference do not require preparation of an Action Plan for mountain development. Thus, question of submission of a report on this point does not arise.

Eviction from forest land

3171. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that State Governments have been directed to summarily evict encroachments of forest land;

(b) if so, the details in this regard, the guidelines for determining encroachment, quantum of forest and under encroachment and evicted, during the last three years and the number of affected families, State-wise;

(c) whether representations have been made to relax rules, as there is human aspect to the problem and to so-called encroachement is actually farming and forest-based activities, carried out by tribal and other backward people for ages, in harmony with nature; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) In compliance of the orders of the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Environment and Forests have issued directions to the various State/UT Governments to evict the ineligible encroachers from the forest land.

(b) Occupation of forest land in violation of Indian Forest Act, 1927 and other State Acts and Rules for the time being in force, is the determining factor for encroachements. Further, the records of the encroachment, eviction and number of affected families are maintained by the State Governments.

(c) and (d) The Ministry has recently received few such representations. In this regard, it may be mentioned that there is no change in the policy of the Central Government with regard to regularization of pre-1980 eligible encroachments and the commitment with reference to Forest-Tribal interface on the disputed settlement claims. In respect of disputed claims of eligible encroachments of the tribals for want of first offence report/ non-settlement of rights etc., directions have been issued to the States that they may consider setting up of Commissions/Committees at the level of District involving Revenue, Forest and Tribal Welfare Departments for their settlement provided other conditions are fulfilled. Further, the States have been directed that in such identified cases, the States should submit their proposals to the Central Government so that final decision can be taken in a time bound manner.

Environment action plan for Bangalore

3172. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal for rehabilitation of existing trunk sewers, civil structure and electrical metallic installations, etc. in Bangalore at a cost of Rs. 49.50 crores, has been submitted to Government;

(b) if so, the present stage of consideration of the proposal; and